

Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Bolli d'anfora greci e romani* by Lucia Criscuolo

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praetexta and *toga pura*, one ought not to miss the studies by W. Warde Fowler, "On the *Toga Praetexta* of the Roman Children," *Roman Essays and Interpretations* (Oxford 1920) 42-52, and L. Bonfante, "Roman Costumes," *ANRW* I 4 (1973) 590-92.

Negativism is a bad habit. I am happy to be emphatically positive with respect to the article by M. Sordi "La sacrosanctitas tribunizia e la sovranità popolare in un discorso di Tiberio Gracco" (pp. 124-30), which means I do not think much of recent work on this subject in England and America. She points out that the tenor of Tiberius' speech in Plutarch *Tib.* 15, runs counter to the basic tenets of Roman sacral law. By its vote the plebs elects the tribunes, but the tribunician sacrosanctity does not derive from this act: it stems from the original *lex sacrata*. As it is not given by the plebs, the plebs cannot delete it (unfortunately her remarks on the *lex curiata* are confused: the *lex curiata de imperio* was not a *lex sacrata*, the sworn law). The moral of the story is this: in the study of *sacrum*, faith and rationalism are the twin and disparate obstacles. The admiration for Polybius of the British and American authors is politically quite understandable, but the trust they place in his analysis of the tribunate is quite misplaced: the tribunate was a political institution, but it rested on a sacral foundation. The superstitious Livy is a much more reliable guide to the Roman mind than the rationalist Polybius.

The senseless collecting of bizarre footnotes is a high ideal of antiquarianism. Too many articles in our collection come close to this ideal. To describe them *spatium, voluntas et vires desunt*.

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LUCIA CRISCUOLO. *Bolli d'anfora greci e romani. (La collezione dell'Università Cattolica di Milano.)* Bologna, CLUEB, 1982. Pp. 179. L. 16,000. (*Studi di Storia Antica* 6)

This volume, the work of a young Italian ancient historian with experience in both epigraphy and papyrology, contains 203 amphora stamps purchased in Egypt (found probably in the Fayum). An eighth of them are from Italy, the remainder from Greek cities, and Rhodian stamps account for two-thirds.

Criscuolo points out three peculiarities of the collection: (1) Rhodian stamps account for a smaller part of the total than the 82 percent in the Benaki collection; (2) the percentages for Kos (8 percent) and Knidos (3 percent) almost reverse the Benaki proportions (Kos 2 percent, Knidos 9 percent); and (3) the number of Italian stamps is far larger than the 1 percent in the Benaki collection. The first two characteristics she attributes to chance. The relatively high Italian contingent, however, she attributes to increased Italo-Egyptian relations in the second and first centuries B.C.; the stamps in question come from the area of Brindisi (pp. 25-26).

The book provides the following: a rather extensive bibliography; an introduction to each of the groups represented; the edition of each stamp; com-

plete photographic documentation; and an index of Greek names (both those in the texts and those mentioned in the commentaries), one of Latin names, and indexes of months, titles, and pictorial motifs in the stamps. The commentaries to the individual stamps are very full, with extensive citation of parallels.

Publishing a small collection like this one requires a great deal of effort and space per stamp because of the comparatively small number of duplicates in a sample of this size; and the editor must devote nearly as much learning to a few as to many. (Compare the 61 pages devoted to 26 stamps in G. Nachtergaeel's publication of the Hombert collection with the 179 pages for 205 stamps here.) The reader is tempted to ask whether the apparatus is not too grandiose for the material. Given the existence of a discrete collection, however, and the remoteness of any possibility of treating these as part of a true corpus, I believe that Criscuolo has chosen wisely in making these stamps as accessible and well-documented as she has. Moreover, proportionately to the vast numbers found, relatively few stamps discovered in Egypt have been published and even fewer found in the Fayum (as Criscuolo remarks, p. 18).

This is a model edition: clear, well documented, amply and useably illustrated, with a commentary containing what a reader needs to know, fully indexed, and accurately and attractively produced at a modest price.

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